

new functions, and new territories to administer; the university attracted students as the only institution of higher learning in the Savoyard domains, and – officially at least – as the only university that the dukes' subjects were permitted to attend.

Turin's rate of growth was starting slowly to outstrip that of the other Piedmontese cities, thanks to the influx of population attracted by the city's new-found political importance. Bureaucrats moved there to work for the dukes; nobles from the countryside settled there, to be close to the new focus of political power; students converged on the university; artisans and merchants migrated there to provide this new urban elite with the necessities and luxuries they desired. The total number of professionals – lawyers and physicians – grew steadily. These new immigrants – merchants from Lombardy, nobles from Savoy, lawyers from different parts of Piedmont, a handful of Jewish merchants and physicians – speeded the transformation of Turin's social structure, diversifying the urban elite and enriching its culture. Their presence contributed significantly to consolidating Turin's position at the head of Piedmont's hierarchy of cities. Turin's rise to primacy among the Piedmontese cities can be followed through their respective population statistics. As could be expected, Pinerolo, the old capital of the princes of Savoy-Achaea, was most affected by Turin's rise; at the beginning of the fifteenth century Pinerolo had a substantially bigger population than Turin, but once the seat of government was moved to Turin, Pinerolo's population started to fall, until by the end of the century Turin had overtaken its former rival. Moncalieri, Chieri, Savigliano and Cuneo were all larger than Turin in the early fifteenth century, but in the course of the century the demographic gap narrowed as Turin's rate of growth exceeded theirs, until by the early sixteenth century Turin had more or less achieved parity with them. Mondovì and Vercelli however were still considerably larger, and in fact Turin would not surpass these two cities and become the largest city in Piedmont until the later sixteenth century, after it replaced Chambéry as the capital of the entire Savoyard state.

Rule by the dukes of Savoy thus conferred a significant benefit on Turin: it was the chief motor of the city's growth. But it had negative effects too. Turin's role as capital meant that the city would be caught up in the generation of dynastic struggles that followed the death in 1472 of Duke Ludovico I's son Amadeus IX, later known as "The Blessed" because of his saintly life. Amadeus IX left his young sons in the care of his widow, Yolanda of France, who assumed the regency on their behalf, as was customary. As so often happened during a minori-